

Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



PACIFIC COMMAND CENTER DEDICATION

April 14, 2004

Quite a few years ago, on one of my many trips abroad to review our military posture in Asia, and to confer with our allies and potential allies, I was invited to visit the headquarters of the military leaders and defense ministers in the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, China and Vietnam. Some were palatial and magnificent; others more modest. But in every case, there was no question as to the power and authority which resonated from their headquarters.

I recall chatting with then CINCPAC, Admiral Larson, about Camp Smith, and how shall we say it, the “understatement” of his offices. I told him that it was equivalent to that of a company commander in one of our allied nations in Asia. That was simply not acceptable.

I do not mean that the headquarters be a palace, but the leader of all United States Forces in the Pacific must command from a position of authority and stature, as demonstrated through his personnel, his equipment and capabilities, and his headquarters.

The planning began with Admirals Larson and Macke. It was then Admiral Prueher who used his power of persuasion to convince the Deputy Secretary of Defense to approve a new headquarters. Admiral Blair picked up the reins, and worked to ensure that the new headquarters would be equipped with the finest in new technology to serve as a model of a 21st century command post.

And now, Admiral Fargo is the beneficiary of the good work of his predecessors. From his office, he and his successors will be able to see from Diamond Head clear to Barbers Point/Kalaheo. In actuality, he will be able to see from Alaska to the

horn of Africa. From San Diego to Vladivostock – and all of the vast geography that make up the Pacific Command's area of responsibility, the largest of any other command in our military.

The state-of-the-art capabilities in this building will allow him to be in contact at all times across the expanses of ocean, and into the nations of Asia, while being able to report back to Washington with the latest information 24 hours a day. But it is not only about the equipment. As important are the dedicated men and women who provide the operational support, and ultimately the deterrence to keep the peace, and provide a measure of stability among the nations in the Pacific.

September 11th taught us that harm's way is now every which way. The battlefield is no longer only in some faraway place. It is on our turf, on our land, and that of our allies. Notwithstanding the malicious forces in Iraq, there is more terrorist activity in South and Southeast Asia than in any other region in the world.

Between September 11, 2001 and November 2003, there were more than 4,600 people injured and another 2,200 killed as a result of terrorist incidents in Asia. This compares to 3,400 injuries and 875 deaths by terrorist acts in the Middle East. This is where the action is. Yes, we are sitting in the middle of it.

So, for anyone who thinks this is pork, think again. If we in America are to continue to live free, this is a wise investment. If we in America expect our interests to be protected abroad and at home, this is a wise investment. I am proud of the small role I had the opportunity to play in the opening today of the Nimitz-MacArthur Pacific Command Center. Congratulations. Godspeed, and God Bless America.